



NJDOE News

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The Parents' Circle **Department of Education Launches Web Site with Parents in Mind**

Commissioner of Education David Hespe today announced the launching of a new web site designed specifically for parents of students in New Jersey's public schools. Known as *The Parents' Circle*, the site serves as a complete guide to New Jersey education.

"This is a very exciting day for me," said Commissioner Hespe. "In my travels to school districts throughout the state, it has become quite evident that parents desperately need factual information about how their school systems work, and how they relate to the Department of Education.

"By launching *The Parents' Circle*, we are providing parents with a convenient way to learn about the roles and responsibilities that their local school districts and the Department of Education carry out on behalf of their children," the Commissioner said. "I encourage all New Jersey parents to go on line, visit the site, and plan to spend some time at the Department of Education web site before they log off."

Governor Christie Whitman praised the new web site. "When parents are informed, they are in the best position to be effective partners in their children's education," she said. "I commend Commissioner Hespe and the Department of Education for creating this valuable information tool."

Visitors to *The Parents' Circle* can get to the site's home page by visiting:

www.state.nj.us/njded/parents

The page consists of the site's logo and headings for the following topics: Understanding Standards, Why Assessment? Are Teachers Prepared? Career Preparation, Facilities for the Future, Children with Special Needs, School Health and Safety, Beginning with Preschool, How Does Your School Measure Up? School Choices, Transportation Eligibility and Law and Policy.

Clicking on each heading takes visitors to a special page describing the topic. Where appropriate, the page contains underlined words or phrases known as "hot links." When clicked, the hot-links will connect visitors with other web-based documents containing details on the topics.

The Parents' Circle is intended to be a dynamic site that will evolve continuously and expand with new and timely information.

Parents using the site will find answers to their most commonly asked questions. For example, in the How Does Your School Measure Up? page, visitors learn how they can make some judgments about the quality of their schools. On that page, they also learn, contrary to popular belief, that the department does not rank schools based on their performance.

The Commissioner provided the impetus for the page when he expressed concern that parents need to be fully informed about Department of Education activities. The Parents' Circle is part of the Department of Education's web site, and can also be accessed through the department's homepage:

www.state.nj.us/education